THE RAGTIMER

JULY 1971

AUGUST 1971

PUBLISHED BY

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF CLASSICAL RAGTIME

NEW OFFERING OF RECORDS FOR SALE

As a service to members, THE RAGTIME SOCIETY Inc. is currently in a position to fill orders for the following items:

BIOGRAPH - BLP1005Q - Vol. II Thomas 'Fats' Waller 1924 - 31
Parlor Piano Solos from Rare Piano Rolls.

PRICE $6. 00 ea. postpaid.

BIOGRAPH - BLP1006Q - Scott Joplin - 1916
Classic Solos played by the King of Ragtime Writers and others from Rare Piano Rolls.

PRICE $6. 00 ea. postpaid.

NONESUCH - H-71248 (STEREO) - Scott Joplin Piano Rags
played by Joshua Rifkin, piano.

PRICE $4. 00 ea. postpaid.

NONESUCH - H-71257 (STEREO) - Heliotrope Bouquet Piano Rags 1900 - 1970
played by William Bolcom, piano.

PRICE $4. 00 ea. postpaid.

In addition, the following records continue to be currently available and priced $6. 00 ea. postpaid.

BIOGRAPH - BLP1001Q - PARLOR PIANO (Various artists)

BIOGRAPH - BLP1002Q - THOMAS 'FATS' WALLER 1923 - 24

BIOGRAPH - BLP1003Q - JAMES P. JOHNSON 1917 - 21

BIOGRAPH - BLP1004Q - JELLY ROLL MORTON 1924 - 26

RAGTIME . . .

UNDER YOUR HAT

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY
INCORPORATED

is a non - profit corporation having the following objects:

To preserve classical ragtime music and to pursue such other activities as shall serve to maintain and develop interest in classical ragtime music and music related thereto.

Play your part by doing all you can to increase interest
in
RAGTIME

****

If you make new friends during your vacation, be sure to introduce them
to
RAGTIME

We hope you will enjoy your summer period of relaxation. At the same time we remind our members to keep right on building an increased interest in Ragtime whenever the opportunity arises, and particularly when new acquaintances are met in their travels.

Great work in the cause of Ragtime is constantly being done at St. Louis through the efforts of the St. Louis Ragtimers and their supporters. The same is true at Los Angeles through the activities of the Maple Leaf Club.

Here in Toronto there has been a new development because of enthusiastic response to the idea that opportunity for a more frequent getting together socially of local members of the Society should be pursued. In March of this year a Toronto area survey was made which resulted in the formation of an informal Entertainment and Social Committee of interested members of the Society. The Committee proceeded to organize and hold a successful Ragtime Party on Friday evening, June 18th, at a club located here in the city.

The entertainment was self-generated and spontaneous. People who are interested in Ragtime in common, readily proved that they can make their own fun.

Reporting of that party as well as the 7th Annual National Ragtime Festival held at St. Louis, Mo. appears in this issue of THE RAGTIMER. Your attention is also directed to the notice of the Society's Annual Bash - 1971 to be held at Toronto on Saturday November 6th.

THE RAGTIMER is the official publication of THE RAGTIME SOCIETY Inc., P. O. Box 520, Weston, Ontario, Canada. All rights of THE RAGTIMER are reserved to the Corporation. Membership is $5. 00 per year and includes all issues of THE RAGTIMER published during the current year. (1971 schedule anticipates six bi-monthly issues.)

Make Your Plans Early To Attend

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY Inc. 7th ANNUAL BASH - 1971

To be held on Saturday November 6th, at TORONTO, 3:00 p. m. to 1:00 a. m.

In the new CARA INN located on the east side of the Toronto International Airport.

The entire lower floor complex of the hotel will be available for the Bash
Foyer - Connecting Corridor - Guildhall - Peel Room
3 Pianos - Continuous Bar
Dinner served at 6:00 p. m. - ample free parking

Price $8. 00 per person (Bar service not included)

Out of town Ragtimers should plan to make the CARA INN the place to stay. (The hotel has 220 guest rooms with color TV) - It then becomes the place you are most likely to meet your fellow Ragtimers.

(See Hotel Registration Card)

We are delighted to announce that arrangements have been made which prepare the way for the biggest and best Bash ever. For the first time there will be two large halls and the opportunity for simultaneous activities. The shift in date from October to the first weekend in November was made in the interests of gaining the finest in accomodation.

Arrangements have been made to obtain the use of Peel Room "A" (complete with piano) on the Friday evening, November 5th, as a reception and warmup centre for members arriving in the city a day early and for the use of local members who wish to drop in and say Hello. The anticipated time will be 8:00 p. m. to closing.

On Sunday afternoon November 7th, the same Peel Room "A" will be available from 2:00 p. m. until 6:00 p. m. for an afterglow fellowship period for our visiting members in particular.

Please mail your registration and remittance one month in advance (by October 6th). Keep in mind that registration acceptance may have to be limited to advance registrations. Last year we had an overflow situation when we were forced to turn away the last of the late registrants.

Ragtimers who decide to stay at the CARA INN have until October 15th to arrange with the Hotel for firm registrations. Reservations sought after that date will be possible but less certain. Some of our local Ragtimers may also wish to become a CARA resident for that weekend. Be sure to mention The Ragtime Society when making reservations.

We hope our members will attend the Bash this year as a Ragtime must. The registration form is attached to this issue of THE RAGTIMER.

RECORD REVIEW

by
TEX
WYNDHAM

Nonesuch H-71248 'Piano Rags by Scott Joplin', played by Joshua Rifkin.

Selections: Maple Leaf Rag, The Entertainer, The Ragtime Dance,
Gladiolus Rag, Fig Leaf Rag, Scott Joplin's New Rag,
Euphonic Sounds, Magnetic Rag.

Yes, Virginia, this is the Lp of ragtime piano solos that caused New York Times music critic Harold C. Schonberg to turn on to ragtime and write a feature article on Scott Joplin that appeared on the front page of the paper's music section on January 24, 1971. Lest this seems like a mocking note, let me hasten to add that this is a very well done record, and the publicity given to it has probably done more to enhance the popularity and respectability of ragtime than anything else in recent years. It's just that those of us who have been ragtimers for some time can't help being amused at the somewhat breathless manner in which this music has now been 'discovered'.

Nonesuch is basically a classical label, and Rifkin is a young (born 1944) musician who makes his living in the classical field. It is not surprising, therefore, that the rags are given a very literal reading on this session.

The result is just about the only, and certainly the best, recording to date of Joplin's rags in the way that he undoubtedly wanted them played. Taken at generally stately tempos (the performances range in time from three minutes, seven seconds to five minutes, eleven seconds), with each note clearly articulated, and without the 'hot' jazz pulse usually given to them by most ragtimers, Joplin's compositions are revealed as intricate, graceful, rich, melodic selections that are in every way worthy of the care which Rifkin lavishes on them.

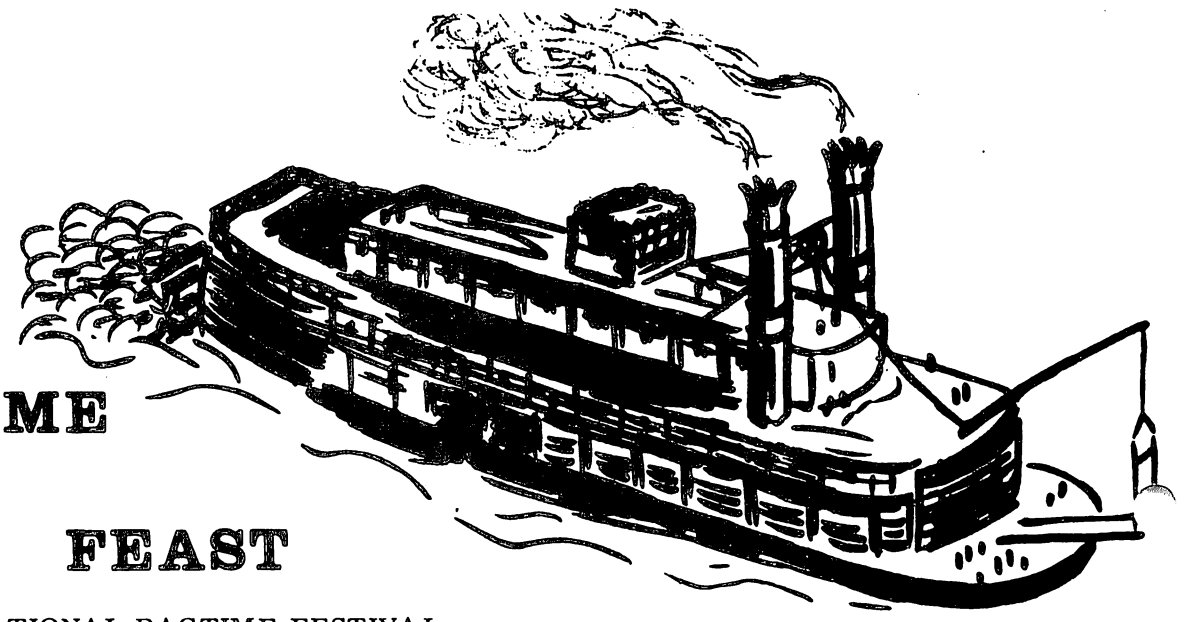
Moreover, if these performances do not 'swing', they are still full of the basic good humor and charm that has attracted so many of us to ragtime. 'The Ragtime Dance' goes sailing off at a brisk, raggedy clip that ought to get most ragtime dancers to tapping their feet; 'Scott Joplin's New Rag' also features a pretty fast tempo, but still brings out the more intricate features later in the tune; and 'The Entertainer', taken at a startingly slow and soft pace, creeps up on you with its steady, infectious rhythm.

Rifkin is a highly skilled pianist, and knowledgeable in the ragtime field. However, he resists combining these features into an attempt to personalize Joplin's work. Instead, except for a few nicely placed grace notes and flourishes, he subordinates himself to Joplin and devotes himself entirely to adding appropriate dynamics and tempos to the printed scores, generally concentrating on those Joplin rags that are most 'classical' in concept.

Some of you who enjoy the more honky-tonk ragtime styles, or the free-wheeling 'country' ragtime, may feel that this Lp is too cold for your taste. However, the skilled, concert-type reading given the tunes not only demonstrates how much music there is in them, but also makes this Lp the one most likely, I'd think, to convert people who haven't heard much ragtime. I find the record most rewarding, and I get more out of it on each hearing. At the relatively low price (Nonesuch is virtually a bargain label), I think most of you will agree.

****

A RAGTIME FEAST



7th ANNUAL NATIONAL RAGTIME FESTIVAL

(Held at St. Louis in June)

by JACK CUFF

Hundreds of happy ragtimers gathered on the Goldenrod Showboat during the three day Ragtime Festival held June 10th to 12th to listen to their favourite music - RAGTIME, and the many talented performers who produced it.

The showboat glowed with lights and bunting as it sat at its Mississippi mooring alongside the St. Louis levee, under the shadow of two towering landmarks, the Eads Bridge and the awe-inspiring Memorial Arch. One is struck by a sense of history, in boarding a showboat that helped carry Ragtime up and down the Mississippi in days gone by, and in looking beyond the levee at a city that had its beginnings before the Louisiana Territory was formed. The Goldenrod Showboat, herself is registered by the U. S. Department of Interior as a National Historic Landmark. The locale for the Ragtime Festival could not be more authentic, that "Old Man River" feeling was inescapable.

Within the showboat the surroundings became a mere bonus to add to the real purpose of the Festival. The entertainment was constant and exhilarating. The talent seemed endless and the mutual enthusiasm of audiences and performers alike developed a tempo that ended the Festival in a dead heat with the total exhaustion of its participants.

It was difficult to keep up with activities, in that simultaneous performances were taking place in the Showboat Theatre, the main deck Bar, and the upper deck Bar.

Mike Montgomery was there with the BOLL WEEVILS JASS BAND from Michigan. The SALTY DOGS BAND from Chicago were in attendance. Knocky Parker from Tampa participated in concert with Tony Parenti - clarinet from New York, Marvin Montgomery - banjo from Dallas and Don Franz - tuba from St. Louis.

Billed as "The World's Greatest Ragtime Pianists" there were numerous performances by Bob Ackermann, Bob Greene, David Jasen, Butch Thompson, and Dick Zimmerman.

It was a delight to hear Olive Brown sing the blues again. She was known as Toronto's own Empress of the Blues but is now Mrs. Graham and, following her marriage, is living in St. Louis.

The headliner guest was the beloved Eubie Blake. His performances always resulted in standing ovations. It was a warm experience to meet with Eubie and his wife Marion at St. Louis and talk over events since their last visit to Toronto some months ago.

Then too there was Chet Ely singing in his best "Mr. Jelly Rolls On" voice to the piano accompaniment of Butch Thompson.

Bob Seeley from Detroit on his first visit to the Ragtime Festival brought the St. Louis gathering to its feet every time he sat down to play stride and boogie piano.

There were many others who performed, always brilliantly and often impromptu.

Last but not least there were the ST. LOUIS RAGTIMERS themselves. Perhaps they got off easy with so much talent on hand. But when they played, the audience could realize why Ragtime lives on at St. Louis. The band has a new member playing clarinet - Glen Meyer. The old regulars are Trebor Tichenor - piano, Al Stricker - banjo and vocals, Bill Mason - cornet and vocals, and Don Franz - tuba.

When the activities ended each night it was not easy to pursuade the remaining crowd that it was time to leave. In fact each night resulted in an after hours gathering of tireless musicians and other diehards like ourselves out on the levee opposite the old Levee House for a musical nightcap. Out-of-routine whistle toots from passing trains added to the scene as their rumbling sounds merged with the beat of the music. The St. Louis Police Department got into the act as well in a goodwill gesture that outstripped the best in planned public relations. Having come upon the open air festivities late in the nocturnal hours of the first night, there was a prompt assignment of police protection against interference that was repeated each night.

As we left St. Louis behind and travelled in a north-easterly direction there was a tugging "we hate to leave" feeling in our being. The pleasure of meeting old friends and making new ones, of attending the Ragtime Festival, and of enjoying the hospitality of the St. Louis gang remains a bright memory.

JOE JORDAN AND EUBIE BLAKE COMBINE THEIR TALENTS AT OMAHA

(Joe is pictured below in the foreground)

'The occasion was written up by Peter Citron and published by the Omaha World-Herald on Tuesday May 4, 1971. The following is taken from that article headed COMPOSER 89: and begins with Joe's views on today's rock music. '

COMPOSER 89

The old gentleman obviously had been asked the question before.

"What do I think of rock music today?" he repeated slowly in a clear voice. "How you going to think of something that you don't hear. I hear a lot of rhythm and noise. They're moving to the rhythm. Today you don't need the tune. The hell with the tune.

"But it ain't music. It goes under the guise of music. It's not bad or anything else, but it ain't music. They should get a proper name for it; they're prostituting a name very dear to me."

Composer-pianist Joe Jordan, at 89, still performs about once a month. So does his friend, also a composer, Eubie Blake, 88.

STARS AT PARTY

They were in Omaha Monday night as special guest stars of a private party presented at Bill Bailey's Banjo Bar by Mr. and Mrs. John Cleary.

Ragtime pianist Bob Darch planned the event, which also featured a ragtime band brought together from Wyoming, Montana and Omaha, and singer Sally Heiss - "Frivolous Sal" - from Carson City, Nev.

Lean, though a little slow of movement and with coronas forming in his eyes, Jordan was articulate in his damnation of today's rock sound.

"Someone should really go to the dictionary and look up the definition of music, before calling this music," said the old man, who wrote Fanny Brice's first hit, "My Lovey Joe."

DOESN'T UNDERSTAND

Blake, composer of such songs as "I'm Just Wild About Harry," is a little less adamant in scorning what's happening today.

"Who am I to knock rock and roll?" he asked rhetorically. "But I don't understand what they're doing. I never know what they're saying.

"But to knock it would be like me going to France and saying I don't like French, because I don't understand it."

Eubie Blake was dapper in browns, today's wide-lapel fashion, looking half his age. But he talked of a trip to Omaha in 1919 with his partner Noble Sissle, now 83, and of visiting here with Broadway Jones on the vaudeville circuit in 1932.

"Tell him about how you discovered Fanny Brice, Joe," he goaded, and Jordan started: "I made a star out of Fanny Brice. I discovered her in a burlesque show in 1909. I had Ziegfeld see her and he hired her.

BARRED FROM ROOF

"Then I had to write her something to sing and stumbled onto "My Lovey Joe', but I never heard her sing it."

Miss Brice opened at the New York Roof Garden and did 14 encores of his song, Joe recalled, but blacks weren't allowed on the roof in those days.

"I stood there in the street with tears running down my eyes," he continued. "The next day I sold a song and took a boat to England."

Jordan came back when he ran out of money, and he's been writing and performing ever since, running across his old friend Eubie Blake every few months on college, TV or party dates.

Today, Joe ended, when young Negroes tell him about prejudice and he recalls how it used to be, he says, "If you've got something people want, prejudice goes out the window."

****

JOE JORDAN - GET WELL SOON

The unconfirmed but bad news has reached us that one of Ragtime's surviving original giants, Joe Jordan, has suffered a set back in his health. We wish and hope that Joe will soon regain the lost ground.

Joe is now in his 90th year and lives at Tacoma, Washington. His last appearance in company with the legendary Eubie Blake took place in Omaha, Nebraska, on Monday May 3rd, 1971 as reported in the foregoing article.

****

"AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY"

Max Morath is scheduled to bring his show "At The Turn Of The Century" to Eaton Auditorium in Toronto for one night, Thursday October 14th, 1971. Toronto area Ragtimers should watch for newspaper announcements.

****

TORONTO AND VICINITY RAGTIME PARTY

On Friday evening June 18th, 1971, about 90 members of The Ragtime Society and their guests attended a social evening at the Royal Canadian Curling Club in Toronto.

The event was publicized among the Toronto area members as the first venture 'Mini-Bash' for a do-it-yourself ragtime get-together. The idea turned into a successful reality. The club lounge provided a natural focal point with its grand piano bar. The party held to an onformality that kept it rolling along with the cheerfulness of a music night in the good old house party style.

The sound of ragtime piano was heard throughout the evening except for three pleasant interruptions. The first was a well received showing of sound movies brought to the party by member Joe Showler who is a distinguished collector of sound movie 'musical shorts'. For this occasion he had selected piano highlights which included practically the entire output of the late 'Fats' Waller and yet less than 1/2 hour in duration.

The second interruption involved general and enthusiastic participation in a singalong of 'Rag' songs for which a specially prepared song sheet was used. The third and last interruption provided the time necessary to partake of a well stocked food buffet.

A lot of piano ragtime was played for an appreciative audience by Dave Flowitt of Don Mills, and by Gordon Sheard a young college student who has already entered the ranks of the ragtime composers. Both are accomplished musicians.

There were others too, who added much to the entertainment. Bob Graham played banjo on occasion. Bob Williamson brought along his drums and joined in the fun. Kazoo players appeared from nowhere. Impromptu groups established themselves from time to time.

Idamay MacInnes performed on the piano playing ragtime in its classical form. Bob Brimson entertained with some stride and boogie piano renditions. Howard Herron a regular pianist at the club where the party was held, found himself drawn into the proceedings. Jack Cuff played for the singalong. There were other pianists present who did some playing, vowing to be better prepared for another time.

Decorations using the ragtime motif added much to the surroundings and the gay atmosphere that lasted throughout the evening.

There are indications that this kind of party is wanted again in the future. With more advance notice the next time, it was felt that members within comfortable travelling distance of Toronto may also wish to join in the fun.

The Entertainment and Social Committee, which acted in liaison with The Ragtime Society, is congratulated by THE RAGTIMER on a very effective contribution to the cause of ragtime. The Committee for the evening consisted of W. McCrostie, chairman; Lorne McEachnie, secretary; and Mr. & Mrs. P. Bell-Smith; Mr. & Mrs. M. Wittman; Dr. Barna; Mrs. Isabel Dickson; Don Jarvis; Raymond Richards; and Mrs. Isabelle Stewart.

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF SCOTT JOPLIN

The following press release from the office of Public Information of The New York Public Library is published in THE RAGTIMER for the information of members of the Society.

WORKS OF SCOTT JOPLIN TO BE FIRST PUBLICATION IN NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY'S AMERICAN HISTORICAL MUSIC SERIES

With the publication, in two volumes, of THE COLLECTED WORKS OF SCOTT JOPLIN, The New York Public Library will launch The American Collection Music Series, a project that will publish rare, historical, and out of print American music in facsimile of first editions or earliest available editions. Complete or selected works of significant American composers, newly assembled anthologies, and republications of existing old collections will be supplemented by new introductions and detailed editorial information. The publications will be drawn chiefly from the Americana Collection of the Library's Music Division.

Scott Joplin (1868 - 1917), known during his life as the "King of Ragtime", was the Black composer who elevated ragtime from music of the honky-tonks to the status of a valid art form. His "Maple Leaf Rag", published in 1899, not only created a world-wide sensation, selling more than a million copies, but it also pointed the way to a new direction in American popular music. After World War One, ragtime was absorbed by jazz and Joplin's classic ragtime faded from sight. Only the efforts of a few devoted followers in successive generations have kept his name from disappearing completely. The current ragtime revival has brought a renewed awareness of his important contribution to American music.

The Library's edition will present his published works, most of which are out of print, in facsimile of first editions. Volume One will include his piano works: 53 rags, marches, waltzes, and miscellaneous other works. Among them is the first publication of a posthumous piece, "Silver Swan Rag", recently discovered in Los Angeles on a piano roll, played by Joplin and credited to him. Volume Two will comprise his works for voice: nine songs and the full piano-vocal score of the three-act opera "Treemonisha", as well as three subsequently published revised excerpts from the opera. Each volume will comprise over 300 pages. Included in the publication are a new biographical and evaluative essay for each volume by Rudi Blesh, co-author, with Harriet Janis, of THEY ALL PLAYED RAGTIME, and a special forward to "Treemonisha" by Arna Bontemps, author of Any Place But Here.

The general editor of the series is Vera Brodsky Lawrence, editor of the recently published PIANO WORKS OF LOUIS MOREAU GOTTSCHALK. She has prepared the Joplin publication with the aid of a grant from The Rockefeller Foundation. Richard Jackson, head of the Americana Collection in The New York Public Library's Music Division, acts as editorial consultant.

The Joplin Collection, scheduled for October 1971 publication, may be ordered from the Sales Office, Room 50A, The New York Public Library, 5th Avenue and 42nd Street, New York, N. Y. 10018 at the pre-publication price of $40 per set, $25 per individual volume. After September 30, 1971 the price will be $50 per set, $30 per volume.

SOMETHING DOING...

JOHN ARPIN - at the Waldorf-Astoria, 8:30 p. m. to 12:30 a. m. in Toronto

NEVILLE DICKIE - at Combe Haven Caravan Park, Hastings, England
Fri. - Sat. until September

GALE FOEHNER - at Shakey's Pizza Parlor, Rochester, N. Y.
Thurs. thru Sat. 9:00 p. m. to 1:00 a. m.

JOHNNY MADDOX - at Cherry Creek Inn, Denver, Col. July 12 to Oct. 2.

KEN MAYHERCY - "Ragtime $ Bill", Holiday Inn, Missoula, Montana

MIKE MONTGOMERY - The Dakota Inn, Rathskeller, Detroit, Fri. Nights

MAX MORATH - on the road with his show "At The Turn Of The Century"
(see also page 10 in this issue)

BOB SEELEY - Ted's Pub & Parlor, Pontiac, Mich., Wed. thru Sat.
Dakota Inn, Detroit, Mich., Sun.

STEVE SPRACKLEN - at the Crazy Horse Saloon, Alexandria Bay, N. Y.
until Labour Day.

TREBOR TICHENOR - and the Saint Louis Ragtimers can be heard on The
Goldenrod Showboat in St. Louis, Missouri

PETER TURNER - at The Bird Cage, Cambridge, England

TEX WYNDHAM - and The Red Lion Jazz Band, at The Surry Restaurant
1100 Philadelphia Pike, Wilmington, Del.

THE TANGO

TWO STEP

by

Joe Jordan

Published for
Band & Orchestra
by

WILL ROSSITER
THE CHICAGO MUSIC PUBLISHER
136 W. LAKE ST. CHICAGO ILL.